



# NEWSLETTER



## *Performance during the Pandemic*

Last year has been an ordeal for many around the world. Taking aside the risks, and unfortunate threats to human health that this year brought, organizations, institutions, and businesses have been definitely impacted, all too frequently negatively.

Institutions (hospitals, laboratories, couriers) have been under tremendous pressure to meet new demands and expectations; at the same time many people have lost their jobs or their businesses.

During the last year CMPT was deemed by the University of British Columbia as an essential service and remained open throughout the year within the context of COVID-19 and complying with all the new safety requirements and limitations.

At the same time other staffing issues and demands impacted our internal operations; our intent and goal were that these would not affect our service quality or our ability to meet the needs of our customers.

In February 2021 a survey was sent to CMPT's customers to evaluate how they were impacted during the last year. The survey consisted of 12 questions that could be answered, either by a pre-set choice list and or by written comments and could be answered in 2 minutes or less.

About half of the responses came from our clinical laboratory participants and the other half from the water testing laboratories and we had a sufficient number of responses for the results to be considered as both representative and generalizable.

Well working communication is important in proficiency testing to address laboratories questions or concerns. Ninety-seven percent (97%)



### EDITOR'S VIEW

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of respondents reported that that was their experience while three percent had an occasional problem that was quickly addressed (Fig 1).

With respect to the shipping and receiving of our samples, ninety percent (90%) experienced no issues and of those that did, most saw the problem as originating at their facility's end rather than on CMPT's end.

Eighty-five percent (85%) did not report difficulties with our

reports, critiques, or grading (Fig. 2). One comment raised some concerns on clarifying how grading determinations are made.

Q1 - About CMPT Communications (including telephone, email, notifications to or from CMPT office)...

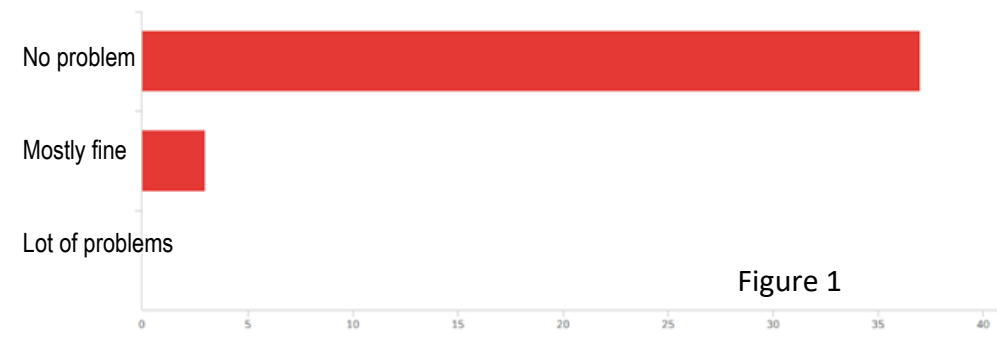


Figure 1

Q4 - About CMPT reports, critiques (grading, clarity, )

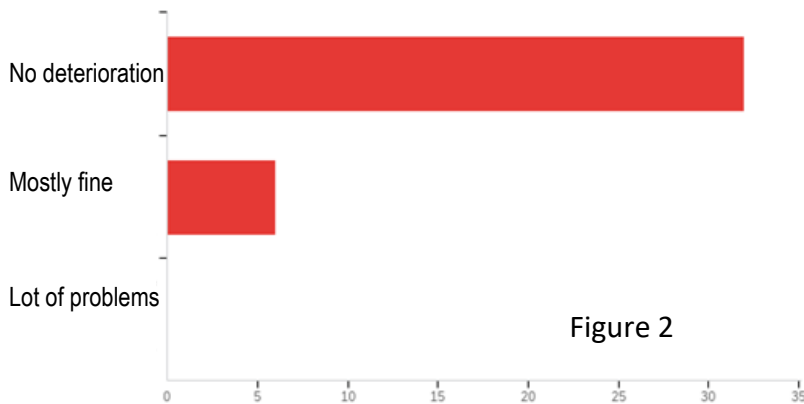


Figure 2

“...our intent and goal were that these would not affect our service quality nor our ability to meet the needs of our customers.”

This information is available on our website but it is possible that the person making the comment may have not had the opportunity to look at it. Unfortunately, because of the anonymous nature of the survey, it was not possible for us to address the problem directly unless they contact us directly with this issue. This may be a topic for an upcoming issue of CMPT Connections.

With respect to the quality of our samples, most reported no problems but some did (Fig 3). In the water testing laboratory community, one problem stood out and was reported by more than one laboratory. The issue seemed to be related to a delayed or questionable testing response with one commercial product when testing PT samples. This became the subject of a thorough investigation, which noted that the problems were scattered, intermittent, and never reproduced. We were unable to identify the cause of the problem though we are following up with interest to see if the problem persists.



Q3 - About CMPT samples (construction, appearance, functionality)...

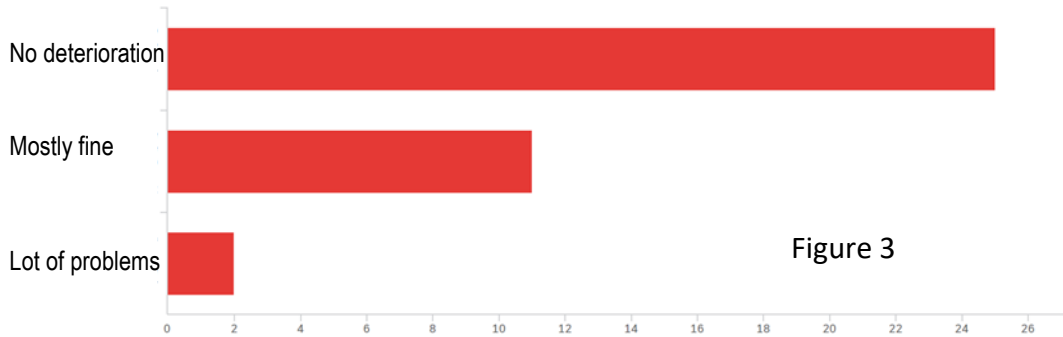


Figure 3

An important question was raised about how the laboratories have been fairing during the year; it appeared that many had been having problems with personnel,(1) workload (2), supplies (3), continuing education (4) and lots of stress (5) (Fig 4). It has been a difficult time.

Over the last year, did you experience changes in your laboratory's ability to work on a "business as usual" basis? Check what applies to your laboratory

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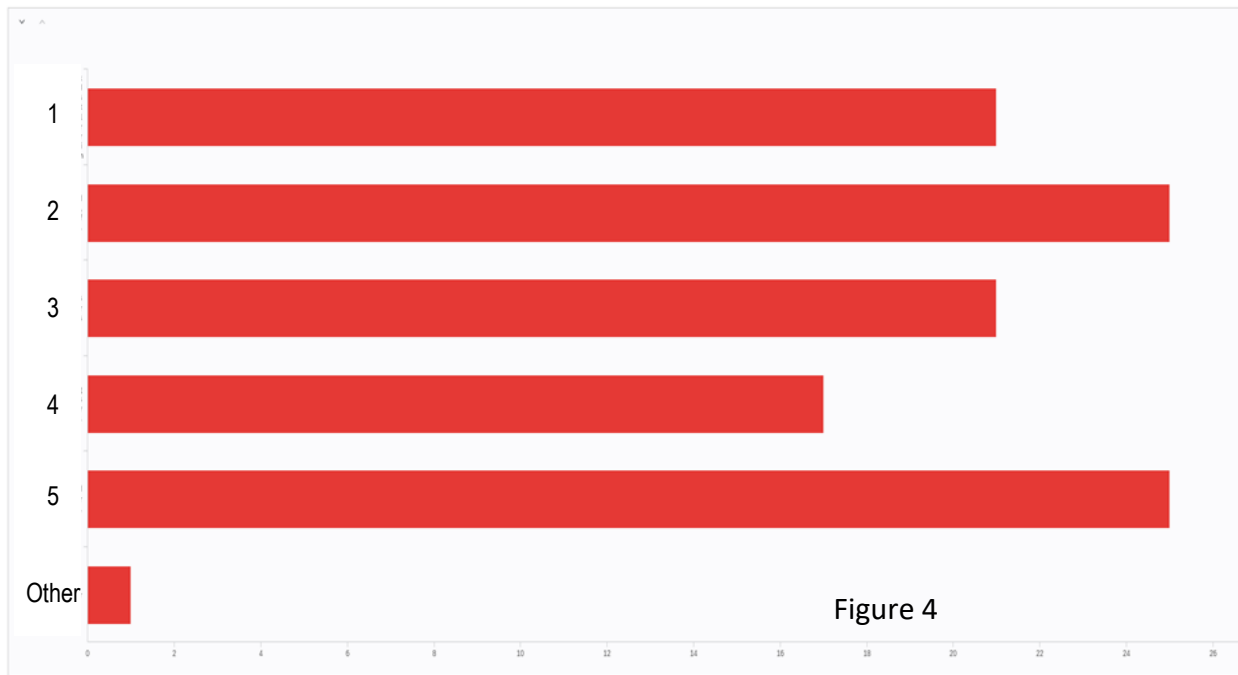


Figure 4

In summary this has been a difficult time for many in the laboratory community. Fortunately, most of the laboratories found the service from CMPT did not contribute to the problems.

Regardless of the size or complexity (or lack thereof) of problems laboratories have with our products or services, CMPT addresses all quality and customer issues thoroughly.

Dr. Michael Noble, CMPT Director



## *Shipping delayed again!!!???*

This last year has been a very challenging one for us, and I have no doubt for all of our clients as well. From getting the denomination of essential service so all our employees could come to work and prepare samples, and perform all activities related to our programs, to try to keep ourselves as healthy as possible as any casualty in this state of affairs would have meant a disruption of services, everything required impeccable management and coordination.

I would have never imagined that I would check my son's daycare family activity pack and wandered "How on earth did they get hold of aspirating pipettes? We have them back ordered for months!!!"

In desperation we opened boxes stored for years containing glass serological pipettes we thought belonged to the chemistry museum; we found glass aspirating pipettes but would we find the rubber bulbs?

We resorted to using all the tubes samples the sales associates had sent us over the years, samples were prepared with a mix and match pool of tubes (we really tried that each lab at least would get one type of tube!); we looked at each other with suspicion, knowing that someone had somewhere in the lab a stash of supplies being reserved for something else. The arrival of any shipment was celebrated as a World cup final, our courier guys feeling like heroes.

Arriving to a time where we can see the light at the end of the tunnel has been a challenge and it required much effort, team work, and creativity from all of us.

We were not alone in this process; many people supported us during this time while still dealing with their own crazy time and crisis. Our committee members picked up even more work when writing critiques as our editor was on parental leave for some months into the pandemic; our clients showed incredible patience when results couldn't be posted on the expected day; and all our partners continued to support us and provide for us even though they were going through the same challenges than us.

To all of them, our deepest thanks; it is a pleasure working with you and for you.

Veronica Restelli, Editor





# NEWS



## *New PT program—EQA for COVID-19 Testing*

This program provides External Quality Assessment for those facilities performing testing on nasopharyngeal swabs for SARS CoV-2 (COVID-19) to demonstrate their methods produce accurate and timely results on patient samples.

Our samples have shown to be suitable to use with several PCR testing systems and three different Health Canada approved Rapid Antigen Testing kits.

Please visit our [Covid-19 program page](#) to learn more.

## *CMPT successfully completes its ISO9001 annual audit.*

CMPT went through its annual ISO9001:2015 certification audit on March 22, 2021. The audit found **no Nonconformities** and **one opportunity for improvement (OFI)** - to incorporate a formal section within our annual Management Review on an annual overview of CMPT experience with our External Service and Supplies Providers.

## *CMPT in the News*

“When Canada’s British Columbia Center for Disease Control (BCCDC) saw the increasing demand for of COVID-19 tests and responsibilities headed its way, it reached out to a well-regarded proficiency testing program for help. The public health agency turned to the University of British Columbia’s (UBC) Clinical Microbiology Proficiency Testing (CMPT) Program.”

Continue reading article published in the [DarkDaily](#) March 26, 2021

### Clinical Microbiology Proficiency Testing

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